

Jetpatcher

Jetpatcher fine tunes its process

Customer satisfaction with its product is high but Jetpatcher is seeking to further improve quality and expand its client base.

Enthusiasm for the Jetpatcher cold lay road repair and maintenance process is building throughout the United Kingdom, according to the early results of a major customer survey. Over 55 local authority users of the process have recently been polled and – with one third of questionnaires returned – average performance rating is running at over 80%.

“The message we’re getting back is a hugely encouraging one,” says Jetpatcher UK Managing Director Richard Jackson. “Our level of service is generally approved of and the effectiveness of our process is greatly appreciated, but we can’t rest on our laurels.” Final results of the survey will be used in Jetpatcher’s drive for

continuous improvement, including knowledge development of key material components.

The Jetpatcher system is based on the technology of ‘velocity patching’ (see Modern Asphalts issue 13 or www.modernasphalts.com) for both preventative and reactive road surface maintenance. Each self contained Jetpatcher lorry is equipped with a large hose and a hand operated nozzle.

This delivers a jet of air to clean the area to be repaired, then to coat the defect with bitumen emulsion (the process is a cold mix/cold lay one), and then to deliver a hightech asphaltic mix to make the repair. Highway authorities can either contract the Jetpatcher company to look after their

roads or purchase the machines and do the work themselves.

One among the latter number is Northern Ireland’s Road Service Direct, the contracting arm of Road Service, Northern Ireland’s sole road authority. Confidence in the Jetpatcher process has grown within Road Service Direct to the extent that the organisation has recently increased its fleet of five Jetpatcher machines to 13 – the eight new ones representing the largest single consignment ever ordered from the Sunderland based company.

Head of Road Service Direct Ken Hutton states that the Jetpatchers “are helping us provide a much better service to the public. Velocity patching is the way forward as far as we are concerned and the Jetpatcher system in particular is technically very acceptable.” He adds that the process is quick, durable and cost effective.

Not that matters cannot be improved, according to Jetpatcher. Jackson believes there are aspects of the Jetpatcher process that must be worked on in order to optimise performance. “For instance, an absolutely vital component for us is the bitumen emulsion that we use and we need to keep up as binder technology advances.”

To ensure that it does, Jetpatcher has turned to consultant Babtie for help in devising an emulsion specification based on the latest knowledge. Babtie is using a



Jetpatcher MD Richard Jackson hands over the keys of a new Jetpatcher velocity patching machine to its new Northern Ireland users.



Jetpatcher was first developed in New Zealand and, over the last 15 years, the technique has been introduced to 23 countries around the world.

combination of recently published literature and draft Euro standards, its own materials analysis and laboratory testing capability to compile the new specification.

“There are three key performance indicators,” says Babbie Technical Director Ian Walsh. “These are the adhesion of binder to the aggregate, the cohesion of the binder itself, and the binder’s viscosity.

“Jetpatchers are helping us provide a much better service to the public — velocity patching is the way forward as far as we are concerned” Ken Hutton

We have had to develop the correct criteria for each of these three areas plus the testing regimes to ensure overall performance that is both consistent and appropriate.”

The document is now out to a number of proposed suppliers for consultation. “We’re determined to maintain the excellence of our products, and the lead we have over our competitors,” says Jackson.

Meanwhile, having seen its process taken up rapidly in the UK, Jetpatcher is setting out to conquer the Continent. “I believe the time is right for us to move into France, the home of much hightech roads

thinking and engineering,” Jackson says.

To this end, Jetpatcher is seeking dynamic French companies to be regional business partners and assist in getting its technology accepted and exploited in France. In particular, companies with a background in roads maintenance and knowledge of the construction sector and its clients are being sought. And to get the

ball rolling, Jetpatcher trials are now being conducted over the Channel.

Not that such an initiative is anything very new to Jetpatcher. The process originated in New Zealand and has spread from there over the last 15 years to 23 countries around the world.

“The name of the game is making customers happy and keeping them that way,” Jackson says. “Our customer surveys here in the UK are relatively detailed and we’re very grateful to those

sending back their questionnaires.”

Customers are asked to score 21 areas of Jetpatcher activity in terms of their satisfaction. The areas range from sales service and support to the conduct of Jetpatcher crews, the cleanliness of operations and invoicing – as well as the more obvious ones about degree of satisfaction with the effectiveness of Jetpatcher pro and reactive maintenance.

“Those unhappy with us get a very good opportunity to let us know. Fortunately, the vast majority polled are very satisfied with what we have done for them.”

email hotline: info@modernasphalts.com



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